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Bhumi Satish Pednekar: Beyond The Noise

By Shweta Sunny
Updated On May 31, 2026, 03:51 IST

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From powerful performances to building something beyond films, Bhumi Satish Pednekar is stepping into a new phase.

The actor on reinvention, resilience and returning to her inner girl

Call it the Cancerian aura or an actor who knows exactly what she brings to the table, Bhumi Satish Pednekar knows who she is and is unapologetic about it. As we await her arrival on set on a blistering afternoon in May, she walks in wearing a loungewear set in sun-faded neutrals, offset with a beaded *rudraksh* necklace. It's clear she sticks to the script off-screen too. Earlier during our conversation, Pednekar had mentioned how spirituality was everything for her and how she wished she had



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Bhumi is wearing a beaded half dhoti trousers, 431-88; ribbed tank top, Zara; emerald clover bracelet, emerald tight bracelet, 'Anitraa' bracelet, all Mozaati; 'The Lumina Tier' bracelet, Veda Diamonds; 'Golden Prism' earrings, Tara fine jewellery; 'Bubble Medley' drops, Raj Diamonds; ankle strap heels, Charles and Keith

For an actor whose career has been built on transformation, it isn't surprising to see how quickly she shapeshifts into an enigmatic energy the moment she steps out for the first look. Dressed in a risqué black cropped jacket and Bermuda shorts, she slips effortlessly into our story of sexy summer blacks. As someone whose career trajectory has seen her inhabit varied characters and colours, Pednekar pulls off the hue, without any reservations.

Known for her unconventional choices from the very beginning, we revisit her debut film *Dum Lage Ke Haisha* (2015), which earned her the Filmfare Award for Best Female Debut. Reflecting on the film, she says, "My first film did not have a lot to do with me, but what the universe had planned for me because I did not go chasing it. Like any other girl debuting in the industry, I wanted a conventional role because I wasn't sure if a film like that would be accepted the way it was accepted. I got lucky that this came my way, and I don't think there were a lot of girls in my position that were ready to go through that transformation."





The role required a dramatic physical transformation, but for Pednekar, the experience became deeply emotional too. "There was a lot of learning about who I am because I had to become a different human being for that character, not just physically but emotionally," she says.

Having battled body image issues from a young age, the 36-year-old has now found comfort in not fitting in. "In school, I was never one of those popular girls, which led to developing a thick skin and not caring what people say," she says, adding, "Even though there's a lot of conversation around body positivity, women are still constantly boxed into beauty standards."





Bhumi is wearing a cropped jacket, Rohit Gandhi + Rahul Khanna; leather shorts, Huemn; 'Mosaic Dome' hoops, Veda Diamonds; 'Emerald Cascade Eternity', 'Emerald Prism Eternity', 'Twin Halo Baguette' rings, all Milo Jewels; 'Cha cha cha 105' heels, Aquazzura

She recalls the scrutiny she faced while gaining weight for her debut role. “People would ask me, ‘Are you in depression? Are you okay?’ It was strange because I was actually in the happiest phase of my life. I was finally getting to do something I had worked towards for years.”

Ask her when did little Bhumi first know acting was her calling and she answers without hesitation. “From very early on, I was that kid in school who was on stage for every activity,” she says. “I always felt extremely liberated and empowered there. I was around 13 when I told my mother that I was going to become an actor and obviously nobody took me seriously. But I took myself very seriously.” By 16, she was already in film school.




Bhumi is wearing a 'XXL detail' one shoulder dress and 'Nov' sandals, both **Louis Vuitton**; 'Twisted Baguette' hoops, **Tara Fine Jewellery**; 'Seanymp'h' chain veil ring, **Outhouse Jewellery**

Coming from a non-film background meant navigating skepticism at home. "My parents were quite unsure because it wasn't traditional education and they didn't know how they could help me become an actor," she says. "But I fought for it and eventually went ahead, and that opened many doors for me."

One of those doors led her to Yash Raj Films, where she worked as an assistant casting director for six years before transitioning into acting. From *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha* (2017) to *Badhaai Do* (2022), the films that followed established her as one of Bollywood's most distinctive voices, often portraying headstrong women rooted in realism. Was balancing commercial cinema with socially driven narratives always intentional? "It comes naturally to me," she says. "I'm a true-born Cancerian. I've always been an empath and a righteous person. In many ways, that is also the only way that I can survive the world. Also, I'm born in a family where there has been a lot of advocacy and activism around me, so I have grown up seeing that."





Bhumi is wearing a beaded half dhoti trousers, **431-88**; ribbed tank top, **Zara**; emerald clover bracelet, emerald tight bracelet, 'Anitraa' bracelet, all **Mozaati**; 'The Lumina Tier' bracelet, **Veda Diamonds**; 'Golden Prism' earrings, **Tara fine jewellery**; 'Bubble Medley' drops, **Raj Diamonds**; ankle strap heels, **Charles and Keith**

She adds, "I'm naturally drawn to stories that have strong messaging and can create social impact. But I also want to entertain my audience because cinema gives people an escape from their worries. Storytelling is powerful and I want to use it to make the world a better place."

For Pednekar, success today looks very different from what it did at the start of her career. Survival has now made way for self-assurance: "When I started off, success was about survival. Making money, creating space for myself and ensuring I could survive this industry. Today, success is about being my most authentic self."





Bhumi is wearing a ruffled long dress, **Hermès**: 'Zenyth Pyramid Luxe' geometric bangle, 'Zenyth Two-Tier Pyramid' cuff bracket, 'Alyssa Marquise' tennis bracelet, 'Alyssa Floral' tennis bracelet, 'Alyssa Radiant Diamond' tennis bracelet, 'Graduated Curved Bar' necklace, 'Cascading Pyramid Pendant' necklace, 'Pyramid Cross Diamond Pendant' necklace, 'Octad Marquise Alternate Pavé' ring; 'La Fleur 8 Round-Cut 6.10mm' square band, 'La Fleur 3-Rows 5mm' round band, 'La Fleur 4-Rows 6mm' round band, all **Verias**

It's a word she comes back to often through the course of our conversation – authenticity. Not in the performative social media sense, but in the quiet, difficult process of unlearning expectations placed on women. “As you grow older as a woman, you’ve to keep working at yourself to appreciate who you really are. Success today is making sure that every day I do things that I truly appreciate and love and not because there’s noise around me.”

That clarity also reflects in the kind of work she chooses. In an industry where female actors are still expected to fit neatly into boxes, Pednekar has consciously avoided roles that reduce women to decorative placeholders. “I’ve still not done roles where women don’t really have much to do or have no agency,” she says matter-of-factly. “There isn’t a certain role in my career that I regret doing. Whether something worked or not is a different conversation, but I’d still not do anything for money.”

Perhaps that conviction comes from someone who has had to constantly rebuild herself – physically, emotionally and professionally. Ask her who Bhumi Pednekar is in 2026 and she pauses before answering softly. “I’m in a phase of transformation and I’m just going back to the girl that existed before I became an actor. Your inner child... the girl that made this life for herself,” she says. “I think Bhumi Pednekar in 2026 is a lot more self-assured. I love myself a lot more today and I am my own priority.”

There’s an interesting duality to her. For someone associated so strongly with rooted, small-town characters on-screen, off-screen she embraces glamour unabashedly. Fashion, beauty and experimentation are things she lights up speaking about as she shares, “People feel that I’m not being my authentic self or I’m trying to fit in, but that’s not true. Anybody who knows me knows how much I’ve always loved fashion and beauty. It’s empowering for me.”

She recalls owning her first vanity kit at 13, stitching clothes and experimenting with outfits long before becoming an actor. But somewhere along the way, public perception flattened her into the

characters she portrayed. “When I started my career, I wasn’t really styling myself out there. I was just listening to what people thought I am. Because of the kind of films I was doing, people assumed that I’m this person,” she explains. “The moment I took charge and realised this is not me, my fashion journey changed. I’m a bold, unconventional person. I’ve never adhered to rules.”

The conversation around body image naturally follows. Over the years, Pednekar’s body has become a public talking point – dissected during her weight gain for her debut film and equally scrutinised after her physical transformations for later roles. However, her narrative is surprisingly grounded. “I have always had a great relationship with my body,” she says firmly. “I’ve never succumbed to what people think I should do.”

For her, the body has always been functional before performative. “My body has to support me till I die,” she says. “I am yet to have children, if I do, and I’m yet to grow older. There is so much that my body is going to endure and I’m not going to let any negativity come towards it.”

Away from film sets and fashion, food remains one of her biggest joys. Scroll through her social media and you’ll stumble upon ‘*Bhooki Bhumi*’, her playful food diaries documenting meals and local delicacies from her travels. The idea, she laughs, came from simply filming herself being most relaxed around food. “My guards are really down when I’m around food and I’m just being myself,” she says. “I’ve always been a foodie and it takes a lot to be in the shape that I am because I love food so much.”

But beyond the obvious love for beauty, fashion and food lies another side to the *Lust Stories* actor that quietly anchors her: Spirituality. Earlier in the day, before stepping onto set, she had spoken about meeting the Dalai Lama and how transformative that experience felt. “Spirituality is everything,” she says. “I wish I had found faith when I was younger. I would have led my life very differently.”

For Pednekar, spirituality isn’t performative wellness culture or aesthetic mindfulness. “Good and bad experiences are going to come in your life. Nobody is immune to the shift of a tide,” she says. “But spirituality gives you that safety net to bounce back.” She often escapes to the mountains for the same reason – perspective. “Every time I’m in the hills, I see how magnanimous these structures are. Nothing man-made. It makes you feel so small and unimportant. It breaks your ego and that’s an experience I thoroughly enjoy.”

That sense of responsibility extends into her environmental advocacy too – a cause she says existed long before fame found her. “I always had climate anxiety,” she admits. “Growing up, the conversation around climate change wasn’t as active because we hadn’t reached that tipping point yet. But those thoughts always stayed with me.”

Years later, with a platform that reaches millions, Pednekar consolidated her concerns into active climate work and sustainability advocacy. “Sustainability, the way I live my life and what my belief

system is, is as important to me as spirituality,” she says. Balancing activism alongside celebrity culture can often feel contradictory, but she refuses to separate the two. “Celeb culture is personal. I dictate the culture that I want to set,” she says, explaining, “What’s the point if I’m only doing *Bhooki Bhumi* on social media and not talk about important things that need to be spoken about?”

The actor has also stepped into entrepreneurship, a journey she describes as one of the most humbling and gratifying experiences of her life. “As an actor, your contribution is what you come and do on set,” she says. “But when you’re building a company, everybody is looking at you for answers.” The shift from actor to founder challenged her in unexpected ways. “There are so many mistakes and failures, but you just keep going. It has taught me that I’m a resilient person and I’d forgotten that somewhere in the middle. Also, it’s not a momentary thing. A film comes and you move on to the next one. Here, there’s no moving on. I’m doing this for the rest of my life and it’s one of the best decisions that I’ve made.”

And then, almost like a return to the romcoms many millennials grew up watching, comes the mention of her next project titled *Adhure Hum Adhure Tum* with Imran Khan. Pednekar lights up instantly. “I’d the biggest crush on him growing up,” she laughs. “He was the greenest flag in all his romcom films.” The film marks Khan’s return to screen and for Pednekar, the excitement is palpable. “Nobody really makes romcoms like that anymore,” she says. “I read it and loved it. It’s elevated, mature and just such a good time.”

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One of One: Inside Six GFA Winners Redefining Distinction




By Vani Kumar

Updated On May 28, 2026, 16:15 IST



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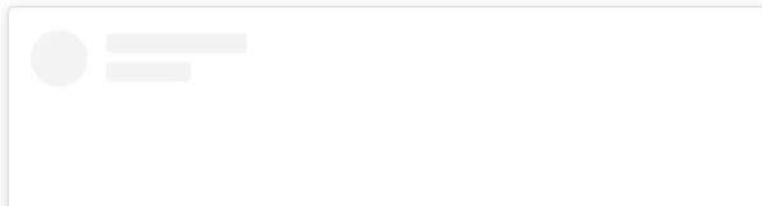
Six GFA 2026 winners under Blenders Pride One & Only redefine success through individuality across fashion, film, music and digital culture.

Blenders Pride One & Only honours six creators who refuse imitation across disciplines

Blenders Pride One & Only is rooted in a simple but rare idea: that the most compelling kind of success doesn't come from scale or visibility alone, but from distinction that is built over time, through instinct, consistency and individuality. It is a celebration of individuals who don't work from existing templates because their work becomes the template. That philosophy found a fitting stage at the Grazia Fashion Awards 2026, where six names across music, fashion, film and digital culture were recognised not for fitting into established categories but for expanding them and redefining what success can look like. Each arrives from a different world, shaped by a different practice and energy, yet what connects them is unmistakable, a sense of identity so clear that it feels self-authored. In every sense, each of them is one of one.

Rishab Rikhiram Sharma: GFA New Wave Sound & Style

Rishab Rikhiram Sharma approaches classical music with unusual emotional clarity. In his hands, the sitar feels more intimate, capable of holding silence, softness and intensity all at once. Rather than repackage tradition for modern audiences, Sharma creates an emotional entry point into it, making centuries-old sound feel startlingly present. His individuality lies in the confidence with which he bridges reverence and reinvention, proving that tradition does not lose meaning when it evolves.



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Raghav Juyal: GFA One & Only Breakthrough Style

Raghav Juyal has built an identity around resisting neat definitions. Dancer, actor, entertainer and observer, he moves between roles with an ease that feels instinctive rather than strategic. What makes him singular is not simply versatility, but the offbeat energy he brings to everything he does. Honoured with GFA One & Only Breakthrough Style, Juyal's individuality lies in refusing polish for people's sake and choosing personality, spontaneity and self-possession instead.

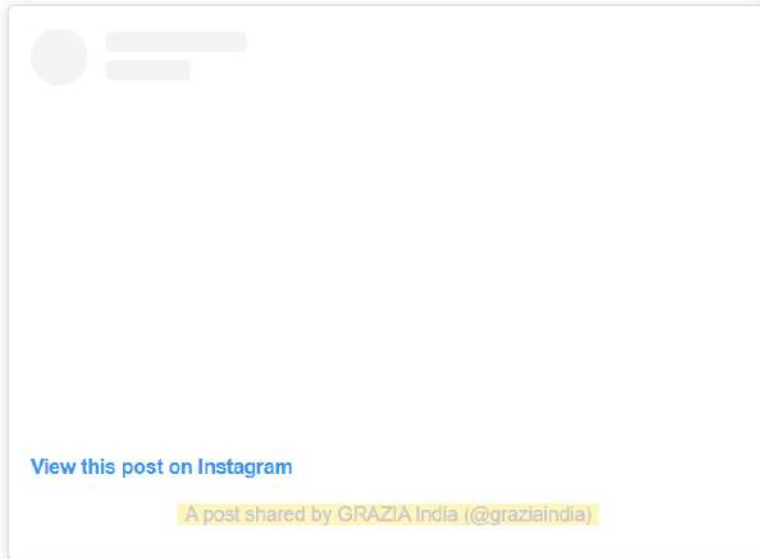
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Dolly Singh: GFA One & Only Creator Impact

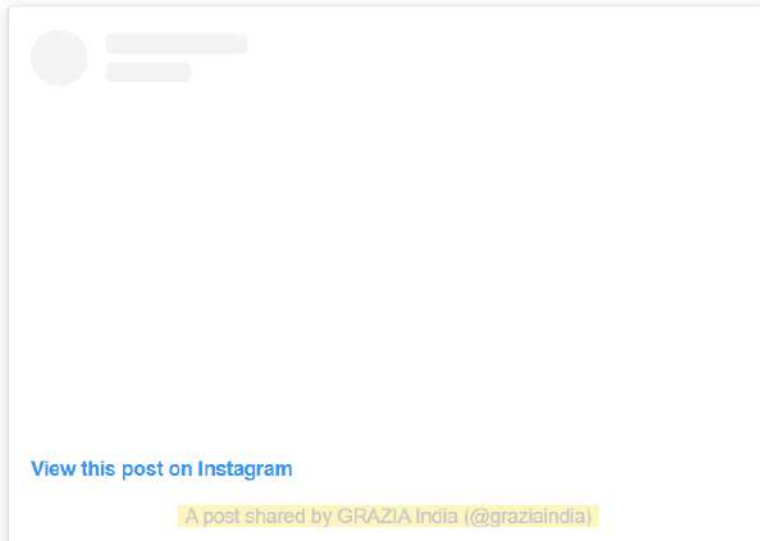
Few creators understand cultural nuance quite like Dolly Singh. She has built a digital voice that feels deeply recognisable with her sharp wit and endless self-awareness. Her humour lands because it understands people and their social performance, aspiration, absurdity and identity in equal measure. Even her relationship with fashion feels intentional, playful yet perceptive. In a crowded internet ecosystem, Singh's individuality lies in the specificity of creating content that does not feel

algorithmically assembled.



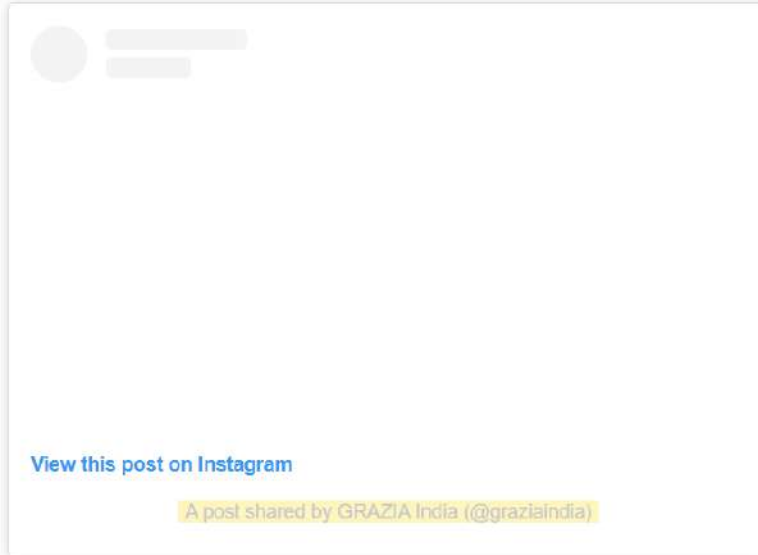
Falguni Shane Peacock: GFA One & Only Global Fashion Impact

Falguni Shane Peacock have never particularly cared for the rules of the fashion industry, they were far more interested in writing their own. Their brand has long been defined by bold, high-glamour statement silhouettes and a confident point of view rather than passing trends. Whether on international red carpets or within couture and bridal fashion, their creations carry an unmistakable identity. Honoured with GFA One & Only Global Fashion Impact, their distinction lies in building a world of fashion that feels entirely their own.



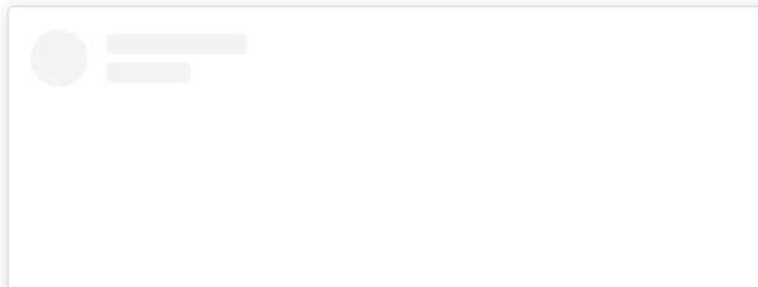
Kriti Sanon: GFA Force of Fashion

Kriti Sanon's relationship with fashion is defined by clarity of instinct. She gravitates towards clean silhouettes, sharp tailoring and draped forms that balance ease with structure. Across fashion and film, she has cultivated an identity rooted in composure while balancing ambition with discernment. Her relationship with style feels instinctive, evolving without appearing over-engineered. Honoured with GFA Force of Fashion, Sanon knows how to set a lasting impression.



Ishaan Khatter: GFA One & Only Global Game Changer

Ishaan Khatter's screen presence is defined by movement and emotional openness. He brings a physical intelligence to performance that feels instinctive, energy shifting between intensity and spontaneity that keeps every scene alive. His presence within a frame carries a restless dynamism shaped entirely by instinct. Honoured with GFA One & Only Global Game Changer, Khatter treats performance as evolution, continuously reshaping himself with each role while retaining a distinctly individual presence.



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NEXT STORY : [Kalki Koechlin On Motherhood, Acting And Choosing An Intentional Life](#)



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Kalki Koechlin On Motherhood, Acting And Choosing An Intentional Life



By **Aranyaa Chowdhury**

Published On May 8, 2026, 20:30 IST



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Kalki Koechlin on motherhood, slowing down, horror roles, and life beyond Bollywood's expectations in Goa.

She is living proof that slowing down can be its own kind of revolution

It's never just a good performance with Kalki Koechlin – our digital cover star for April – it's a character that follows you home. Think *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani* (2013), still looping through house parties and heartbreaks a decade later. Think *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (2011), which has graduated from being an aspirational travel film to our emotional handbook. And then think of Natasha (from *ZNMD*) – the girlfriend everyone loved to hate, until they didn't. "I had someone tell me they hated her when they were younger," Koechlin says, smiling, "and then years later, they were like – I actually relate to her now."





Kalki is wearing a studded blouse, pre-draped sari, both **Tarun Tahiliani**; heels, **Aquazzura**

Her work ages differently. It catches up with you. When she logs onto our pre-shoot call for our digital cover, she's warm and refreshingly unfiltered. This is before the archival couture, before the camera, before she steps into pieces by Tarun Tahiliani, Anamika Khanna, Rohit Bal, JJ Valaya, and Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla – garments with histories of their own, fitting for someone whose work also has a way of staying.

You ask her about instinct, because she has always seemed like someone who trusts it more than any carefully drawn plan. She answers: "I think motherhood really gets you back in touch with your instincts. It slows you down." Not in theory – in practice. "They begin in your body," she says. "They're not intellectual." If she feels overwhelmed, she doesn't push through. She recalibrates. Returns to herself in small, physical ways.

And yet, even as she speaks about slowness, her mind is clearly occupied by something consuming. A play – *Belly of the Beast* – is, as she puts it, "driving me crazy." Co-written with Sheena Khalid, it explores five women moving through different stages of motherhood, but through a surreal, psychic lens. "We see the real women, and we also see what it actually feels like for them," she explains. *ZNMD* – the girlfriend everyone loved to hate, until they didn't. "I had someone tell me they hated her when they were younger," Koechlin says, smiling, "and then years later, they were like – I actually relate to her now."





Kalki

U N S C R I P T E D

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that doesn't let you stay attached.

Neither, it seems, do the stories she's gravitating towards right now. She lights up when talking about recent watches – films that sit in discomfort. She mentions *Sabar Bonda* (2025), a Marathi indie about a gay couple, with admiration. “We don't get to see male bodies falling in love like that very often,” she says, pointing out how rare tenderness between men still feels on screen. Then there's a documentary on postpartum psychosis – *Witches* (2024) – which, she admits, made her cry. *Nightbitch* (2024), starring Amy Adams orbiting similar themes of motherhood and unraveling. There's a pattern here. Intensity. Interior worlds. Stories that don't tidy themselves up.

It mirrors, in many ways, what she's working on – and perhaps where she is mentally. Motherhood, as she describes it, isn't neat or one-dimensional. “You become a new person,” she says. “It's very difficult sometimes to accept that you can't be the person you used to be.” There's honesty in that, but also a kind of curiosity. A willingness to sit inside the change rather than rush past it.

That has reshaped her relationship with acting as well. Earlier, she admits, she was far more rigid. “I practised it this way, so I must stick to it.” Now, there's play. “A scene could happen in a hundred different ways.” She allows for that unpredictability, leaving space for something unexpected to emerge.

Which is perhaps why something like *Anarth* (yet to be released) feels like a natural next step. “It's a really intense role,” she says of the upcoming supernatural thriller series. “It's a horror movie, but my character is very personal because it's about a mother.” She doesn't give much away – but she does admit it was “a very gruelling experience.” The kind of role that takes something out of you before it gives anything back. “I'm glad it's over,” she adds, laughing lightly, “but I'm also really looking forward to seeing it.”

That duality of exhaustion and anticipation feels very much like where she lives right now. Away from set, life in Goa has grounded her in ways Mumbai never quite could. Her daughter climbs trees, grows vegetables, and understands the slow care behind everyday things. There's joy in that, but also intention. Of course, it comes with compromise – constant travel, a life split between stillness and movement. “I'm on a flight almost every week,” she says. But it's a trade she's made peace with.

The same clarity extends to how she approaches visibility outside of work. “There was a time I used to get anxious about what to post,” she admits. Social media once felt like an extension of the job – another performance to maintain. Now, she's drawn a boundary. It lives on her tablet, not her phone. “Otherwise, I felt the pressure to keep up.” That small shift has changed her relationship with it altogether.

That's what success looks like to her now. Not scale or saturation – but space. “Success for me is the privilege of taking my time,” she says. Because in an industry that rewards momentum, Koechlin has chosen a slower pace. A life where work, motherhood, and self aren't constantly competing, but occasionally – briefly – aligning.

Photographs: YUSUF LOKHANDWALA

Fashion & Creative Director: PASHAM ALWANI

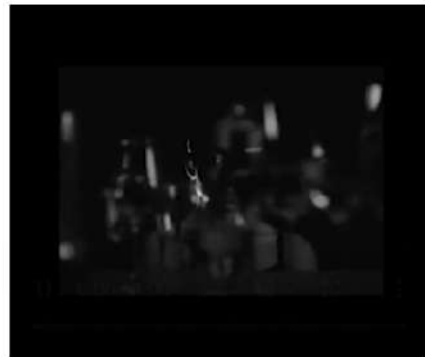
Words: ARANYAA CHOWDHURY

Hair & Make-up: ANGELINA JOSHEPH

Assisted by (Styling): DEVIKA PAWAR

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Yami Gautam Dhar Opens Up On Movies, Motherhood And Her Deliberate Momentum



By Mehernaaz Dhondy

Updated On May 7, 2026, 13:47 IST



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Yami Gautam Dhar on films, motherhood, and redefining success in Bollywood with intention and powerful choices.

Her drive is undeniable, inward and definitely intentional

What makes up a shift in gaze? In scientific terms, it refers to the rapid, often voluntary movement of the eyes from one point of focus to another to bring a new object onto the central retina. In Yami Gautam Dhar's case, it's a shift in collective attention – a keen focus directed specifically at the actor, a spotlight towards her career with her grounded and content-driven film choices.

But Gautam Dhar says her moment of reckoning was in offing since awhile, she's got a timeline marked out in her mind too. "Somewhere if I have to tie that thread in, post *Bala* and *Uri* in 2019, just before Covid. That's when I think the shift happened for me, directors started seeing me in a different sort of sense – that maybe she's trying to pivot." This pivot reflected in all her next few choices of films – *A Thursday* (2022), *OMG2* (2023), *Chor Nikal Ke Bhaga* (2023), *Dasvi* (2022). "Then came *Article 370* (2024) which I thought, was a massive shift for me. At the same time on the personal front, I was expecting my baby. And of course, now it's with *Haq* (2025)."



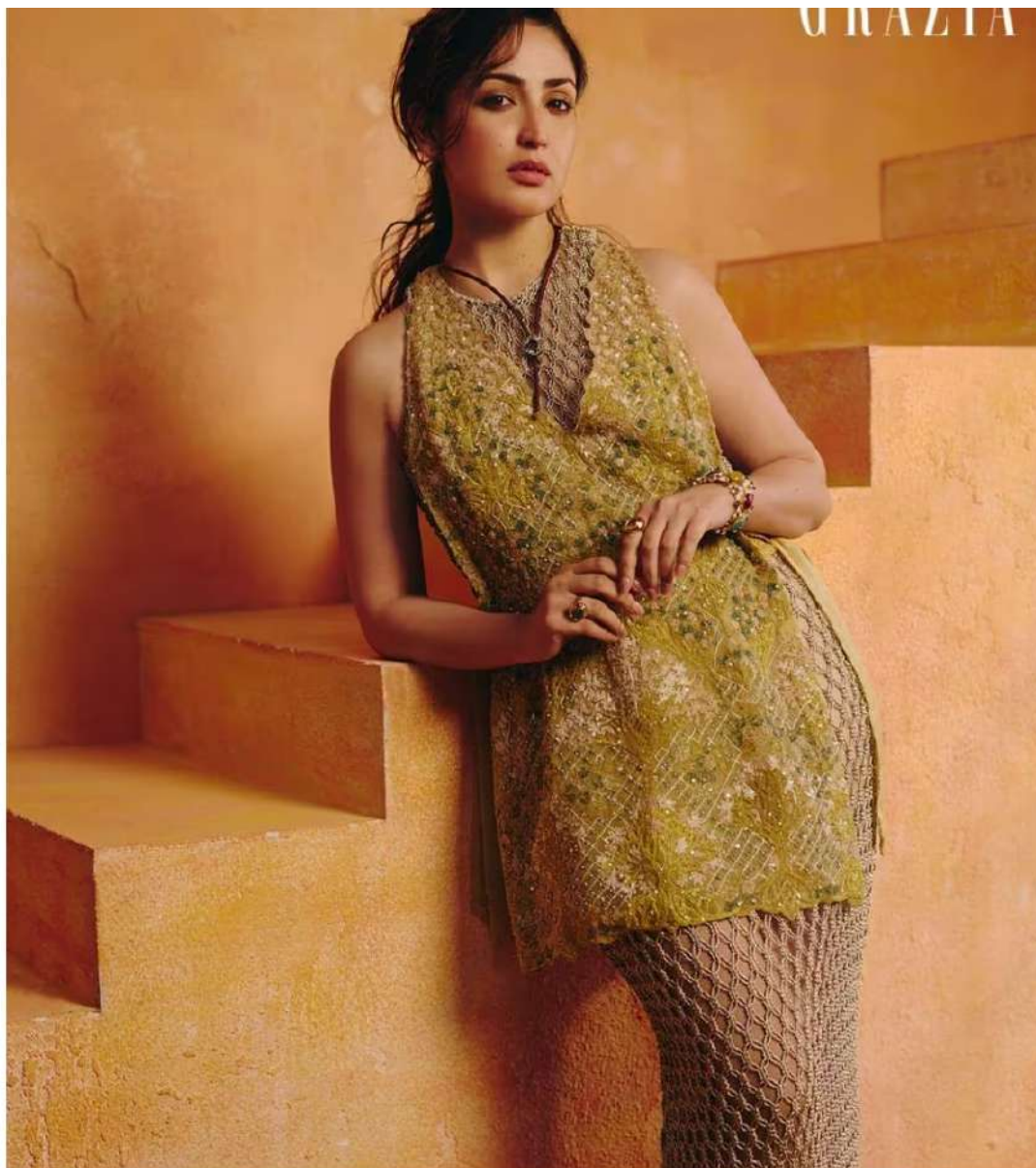


To an extent, Gautam Dhar is now owning space as the main character in her own stories, without waiting for it to be handed to her – all of it with the intention she brings to her roles, big or small, or the way she inhabits them. "All these definitions have changed now, and I think Dhurandhar is the best example", she says, "Each and every character has left an impression because the characters are written in that sense. I've understood this also stems from a sense of industry culture, that this is the female actor, this is the male actor, this is the hero – it's possible to dismantle that completely and chase brilliant characters and writing. Which is why I always go back to 2019 to *Uri* and *Bala*, because when you are celebrating a moment, it is never about just that, it's about the journey that led you to it."

After her latest courtroom drama outing *Haq*, the 37-year-old actor's wish list doesn't quite include dream roles but rather working with brilliant filmmakers, and original ideas. "Something new, something fresh – not just as an actor but also from an audience's lens. Even the audience in me must be equally excited. That's what I'm looking at, that motivation and excitement to just keep giving my best. You could make endless lists, but this is what I want to do."

We're talking about learning curves and Gautam Dhar believes that it can never be linear. "There's always a time where you feel that you could have done something better, but that's where the director's vision and perspective come in. Even on set though I'm prepared, moments before the scene or any shot, I'm still thinking, is that okay, or let's try this and I'm just trying to bring it alive in my head. It's not that I do too many rehearsals, I like to go in with a lot of spontaneity." For her, the first shot is where the magic happens. "That first shot is also not just random that prep is somewhere there, you've seen that scene play out or that expression is in your mind when you were reading the script, so that process is always on. You always feel it could have been better, or the next one will be better, I think that thrill is it to be on the edge and it also keeps you in check."





Yami Gautam Dhar is wearing a Macramé dress, embroidered overlay, both **Anita Dongre**; yellow sapphire necklace, **Vak Jewels**; bracelet, **Tara Fine Jewellery**; rings, **Swarovski**

The film industry has witnessed a growth curve of its own, she adds, picking up *Dhurandhar*, (directed by her husband Aditya Dhar), as an example once again. "This is why I said it was always a director's medium – it was always script and all those basic things that make a film, a film. The basics are back, so that's a massive shift. It's not just about a film doing well and new box office records – I

don't think *Dhurandhar's* success is telling us only that. We were struggling to get people into theatres, and we were figuring and toying around with things. But people thronging theatres tells you – we are ready, we want you to make amazing films, we'll watch, and yes, we'll come repeatedly."

Gautam Dhar's next film is already in the works she tells us – this cover shoot and interview are literally a result of time between demanding shifts during filming *Nayyi Navelli*. The fact that she's also a new mother enters this dynamic, which requires a new level of navigation while in the movie business. "It's because of the support system I have; it would have been difficult otherwise. We need help, there's no denial in that, but we must acknowledge it, and when that help is given, there's nobody else than your own family. I'm very grateful to my mother because that's how I can do what I do. With a baby so young, even a set is not the right place perhaps for a child. It's literally your heart outside your body, and who do you trust with your heart when both the parents are working." The Dhars have their planning codes in place though. "Right now, I'm working, and Aditya's just had both the releases so now he can be with Vedavid. Of course, our families are there, so we figure this out together. You can't fully plan this, you have to go with the flow – keeping in mind that the biggest priority in life forever will be your child, your parents and your family." Having said that, Gautam Dhar's quick to add that if she's made a commitment as an actor, it's one she respects and honours to her best. "Till today my mother's like you go work, he's here with me and safe. The reason I'm able to give my 100 per cent is that I know he's here."

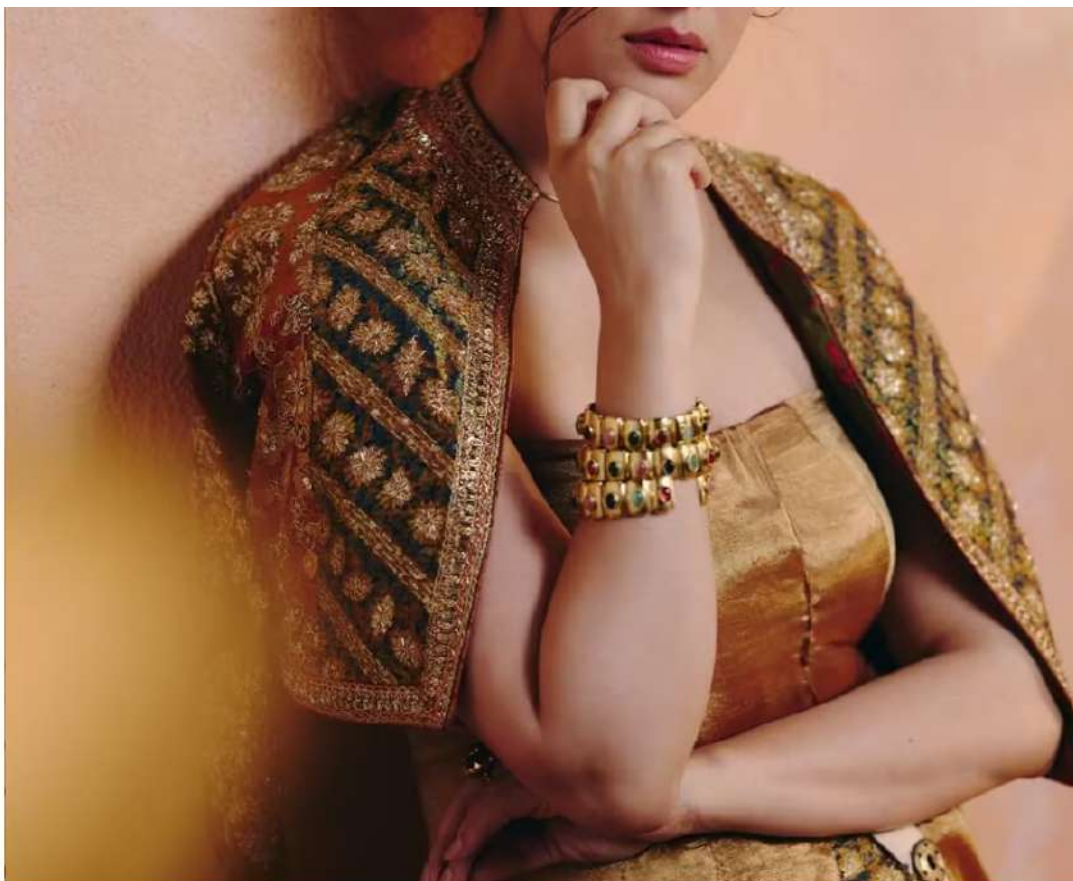




Yami Gautam Dhar is wearing a shirt, Ritu Kumar; draped skirt, OTT by Tarun Tahiliani; ring, Azga; ring, Tara Fine Jewellery; ring, Moi; ankle strap heels, Oroh

Growing up in Himachal, Gautam Dhar tells us her mother always made her and her siblings a part of everything she did, something she's trying with her son as well. "For example, with my yoga time. I have the option for early morning, but then my second option is to practise it in front of him, when he's up. Even if it's for five minutes, he'll watch, come and do one or two poses – and then he'll show us later. I really enjoy it." She goes on to speak about small, sweet rituals that tie their days in together. "There's another little thing I do, whenever I remove my make-up I have a little music, and dance, it's my little ritual, so now when he's around, I do that with him. I love sharing those moments with him. One thing that's completely mine is my *chai* ritual early morning. I have this thing to have hot *chai* and I don't have it around him for safety, I've kept that morning time for me."





Yami Gautam Dhar is wearing a silk blouse, **Urvashi Kaur**; embellished skirt, jacket, both **Ritu Kumar**; gold plated bangles, **Anatina**; ring, **Azga**

Beyond the accolades and box office numbers, has the professional praise on *Dhurandhar* or even her own films influenced any personal perspectives? "Nothing has changed us as people. That also comes from Aditya, and the kind of person he is, very unaffected and extremely humble. I've seen him through different phases, there are highs and lows and vulnerable phases – but it's not like during that phase we expressed our frustration or let it out. Both of us are extremely thankful to God, for us spirituality is very important, we believe in the Almighty." Somewhere right energy attracts the right outcome, and she agrees, "Good things happen to good people. What's meant for you may be delayed but never denied."

Editor-in-chief **MEHERNAAZ DHONDY**

Photographs **SUSHANT CHHABRIA**

Fashion & Creative Director **PASHAM ALWANI**

Words **MEHERNAAZ DHONDY**

Make-up **DIVYA ARTH SHETTY** at **EFICIENTE MANAGEMENT**

Hair **MIKE DESIR** at **ANIMA CREATIVES**

Assisted by (Styling) **DEVIKA PAWAR, BHAVNA RAJANI**

Production and set manager **YUSUF LOKHANDWALA**

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NEXT STORY : Sahher Bambba: Beyond The Breakthrough



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Sahher Bambba: Beyond The Breakthrough



By **Adit Ganguly**

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Sahher Bambba reveals how Aryan Khan's call changed her life and what it was like meeting Shah Rukh Khan on the sets of The Bads of Bollywood.

After a period of persistence and auditions, Sahher Bambba reflects on the life-altering call from

After a period of persistence and auditions, Sahher Bambba landed on the big screen with Aryan Khan and why, in the high-decibel world of Bollywood, she's choosing to let her work do the talking.



The trajectory of an industry “outsider” is rarely a straight line. It is a series of loops, false starts, and the humbling realisation that a debut film is often just the beginning of the struggle, not the end of it. For Sahher Bambba, the journey between her first project and the whirlwind of *The Ba*ds of Bollywood* was defined by a return to the grind. It is the classic newcomer’s dream: That one call, one

room, and one role can pivot a life overnight. For her, that pivot has finally arrived. She is no longer just waiting for her moment; she is living it, with her eyes fixed firmly on the horizon.



Success in cinema often feels like a mirage – just when you think you’ve reached the oasis, you find yourself back in the desert. Bambba experienced this firsthand after her initial projects didn’t ignite the way she hoped. “The time was spent doing auditions. It did feel like I was going back to square one because mostly, any outsider from the industry feels that the biggest struggle is getting the first film. And after that, things are just going to happen organically. But since my first couple of projects

him. And after that, things are just going to happen organically. But since my first couple of projects didn't work out the way I had expected, I had to audition and start from scratch. There were days where you're exhausted and losing patience," she recalls.

Then came the call that would shift her universe. In September 2022, a casting director reached out for a project headed by Aryan Khan. "At first, I was very excited to play the part, but it felt very far-fetched. I went and auditioned. There were two very big scenes and after that I didn't hear back. I thought they locked someone else," she says. After three rounds – the final one held at the Red Chillies office in front of Khan himself – the agonizing wait began. "I was very restless and impatient as I thought someone else got the role."



The breakthrough finally came on March 2nd, when Khan called her personally to deliver the news. The scale of the project only became clear later. “I didn’t know about the ensemble cast. I just knew I’d be alongside Lakshya. I met everyone for the first time on the first table read. At that time, Bobby (Deol) Sir was the only actor who wasn’t finalised.”

For Bambba, *The Ba*ds of Bollywood* wasn’t just a job; it was an education. Stepping onto a set led by a focused first-time director and co-stars like Deol required a total shedding of ego. “I realised life isn’t going to be the same during the auditions. Because I knew things would change drastically if I’d got the part,” she notes. “There was a lot of butterflies and a lot of prep went into it. I didn’t have any pre-conceived notions. There was so much to learn from Bobby sir. Even when I wasn’t shooting, I went on set just to learn what’s happening.”





She found a mentor in Aryan Khan's work ethic, describing him as a leader who leads by example. "Aryan is very patient and very sure of what he wants. He isn't lazy in any aspect. He will give his all and I've seen that man put in the amount of hours and hard work. He didn't take a single break during the writing and directing the show."

Perhaps the most surreal moment of this journey was the intersection of her professional life and her childhood admirations. Meeting Shah Rukh Khan at a pre-shoot pooja was a moment of pure, unadulterated awe. "I was standing in a corner since I was shy and in awe of this man who I grew up watching and admiring on screen, and to know that he was right in front of me. He caught onto that and very sweetly gave me a warm hug. They always say that 'never meet your heroes,' but he's the one person who you meet and fall in love with him even more."

The weight of the journey – the auditions, the rejections, and the eventual triumph – hit her during the show's teaser launch. "The reason why I cried at the teaser launch event was because things just felt so overwhelming. It was a moment I had dreamed about that came to life. When I came back home, I was all alone, and all the past weeks and months flashed before me. It was all worth it."





Sahher is wearing an Embellished tunic, scarf, crystal earrings, bracelets, W for Women (@wforwoman); heels, A&S (@aands_official)

In an era where actors are expected to be “seen” at every party and event to stay relevant, Bambba is making a conscious choice to pull back. She is banking on talent over networking, a rare gamble in a visibility-obsessed industry. “I realised very early on that your work will only happen via auditions and actual work. No matter of parties will. It doesn’t work for me. I’m a very anti-social person. So for me to even go to someone and make small talk doesn’t come naturally. It works in my favour as I anyway don’t like stepping out much.”

This independence extends to her decision-making process. While she values her team, the final word is always hers. “Every decision is something that hasn’t changed since the very first day is that I make them by myself, be it good or bad. I have let gone of a lot of tempting things because I felt a certain way and didn’t feel confident about it. I’ve also made decisions against the wishes of people.”

As she looks toward the future, Bambba is hungry for complexity. Her wish list includes directors like Imtiaz Ali, Zoya Akhtar, and Aditya Dhar. “I really want to do something very different from Bads. Maybe a thriller, a grey character, a meaty role,” she says.

Even her evolving sense of style reflects this grounded, “no-fuss” philosophy. Authenticity is the only trend worth following. “You should never ever try too hard because it always shows on camera. Then it looks like the clothes are wearing you and something looks off with the audience catching it. My brief to every stylist is that to keep things comfortable and something that feels is an extension of my personality. I’m still discovering what I like the most, but what I see myself wearing the most is a *ganji* and jeans.”

Sahher Bambba has arrived, but she isn't shouting about it. She's simply heading back to the acting workshops honing her craft and waiting for the next role that demands her all.

Tags - Sahher Bamba | Aryan Khan | Shah Rukh Khan | Bads Bollywood | Bobby Deol | Lakshya | Red Chillies | Bollywood actress | Netflix series | Bollywood debut | Bollywood outsider | SRK | new actress | Bollywood interview | acting audition | Bollywood newcomer | celebrity interview | web series | Indian actress | Bollywood news

NEXT STORY : Kiara Advani Enters Her Next Chapter With New Intent And Pure Instinct



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Kiara Advani Enters Her Next Chapter With New Intent And Pure Instinct



By Shweta Sunny

Updated On Mar 27, 2026, 23:29 IST



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Kiara Advani's journey from debut to stardom, her instinctive acting, iconic films and collaborations shaping modern Bollywood cinema today

Twelve years in, the directors who shaped her performances reveal the actor behind the lens

It's the first Monday in March and the mood is summery, fresh and bright. Personifying that, our cover star for the month, Kiara Advani, walks on to the set wearing a floral, multicoloured sundress. Fresh, bare skin and her naturally soft, wavy tresses frame her face as she surfs through the clothing rack before heading for hair and make-up. Her arrival, to put in two words, was easy and settled in.

She just fit in without making noise



In Bollywood, there are actors who arrive with ambition alone, and then there are those who arrive with instinct. Advani has always belonged to the latter. Long before film sets and box office numbers, before *Fugly* (2014) and *Kabir Singh* (2019), there was a classroom full of children, and a young Advani who had already found her first audience.

"I always wanted to be an actor. Early on, my parents figured that I had this little *keeda* in me," she says, simply. Not as a distant dream, but as something she held close while growing up. Her parents,

protective yet practical, insisted she finish her education first. In the interim before her first break, her father nudged her towards having a set routine in her daily life. That routine led her to her mother's playschool, where she worked as a teacher. "I used that as my mini stage," she smiles. "Those toddlers were my first audience, and a very forgiving one, as they would always have the biggest smiles if I did anything."

It's clear on set that she knows her way around. Once the photographer is ready for the first shot, she transforms effortlessly. There is no flip switch, no magic wand, just her expressive almond-shaped eyes flirting with the camera swiftly, and that goes to show she is a pure natural at this.

Twelve years on, that instinct has only sharpened. What began as a wide-eyed dream has evolved into something more layered: An actor shaped by failure and faith. When her debut with *Fugly* didn't land, it instead grounded her. "Failure is the best teacher," she reflects. "It made me tougher, more resilient and that drive never stopped."





Kiara is wearing a hand embroidered jacket dress, Rahul Mishra; polki pendant, Valliyan; ring, Mirari; ankle strap heels, Jimmy Choo

If there's one thread that runs through her career, it is her relationship with directors. "I'm truly a director's actor," she shares. The *Guilty* (2020) actor believes that the connection between the director and an actor is everything. "As an actor, you're portraying such layered emotions, which can be very vulnerable, so it's important you are comfortable with the director. There has to be trust and that synergy."

That synergy has shaped some of her most defining performances and it's perhaps why, when you speak to the filmmakers she's worked with, a portrait begins to emerge – an actor who is constantly in conversation with her craft, her collaborators and herself.

For Karan Johar, who directed her in *Lust Stories* (2018), Advani is both instinctive and deeply perceptive. "She comes alive on camera," he says, recalling a particularly challenging scene that required emotional vulnerability stripped of all performance crutches. With the set cleared down to three team members, she delivered it in a single take. "That's when I realised she's a solid actor, and one who understands instructions and has great comprehension."

From the girl who wanted to be a quintessential Bollywood heroine, it was her high emotional intelligence that moulded and set her apart as an actor. "Kiara is the most beautiful crier in the whole world. I've never seen anyone cry as beautifully as her on-screen. She touches you and pulls at your heartstrings."





Kiara is wearing a cut-out bodice, draped satin skirt, 24K plated gold and onyx earrings, 24K plated rings, 24K plated cuff, all Misho

Off camera, Johar adds, she is “well-mannered, immensely cultured, and one of the most beautifully raised children”. She is empathetic and someone who is deeply rooted in family, traditions and values, so much that his mother, Hiroo Johar, “loves and adores Kiara, and always says that all daughters should grow up to be like her because she has such a beautiful way of expressing her love to elders.”

That emotional intelligence is something Ruchi Narain witnessed up close while directing her in *Guilty*. For Narain, Advani's greatest strength wasn't just her ability to perform, but to feel. “She has a lot of empathy as a person and is an intelligent actor who knows her creative priorities, and is able to grasp layers and subtleties well.” From immersive workshops to conversations with survivors, the 34-year-old approached the role with openness and rigour, especially at a time when streaming projects and unconventional roles were still considered risks. “She has no ego at all and will tell you exactly what's on her mind, including her apprehensions. She was coming off Kabir Singh, and yet she chose *Guilty* because she believed in it.”

That instinct to choose feeling over formula has been a constant. Even Advani acknowledges it. “It has always been how I approach work. I am a people's person. If I connect with the story and the people, I don't think beyond that,” she says. “We just hope the audience loves it.”



